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religion and morality as followed by earthly prosperity, on which the religion of Israel insisted, contains just as evidently the prospect of reward and builds upon it just as emphatically as does that of Egypt. A plausible explanation recently urged is that the Old Testament writers were so familiar with the thought of the future life that they do not think it necessary to urge it and its sanctions as a motive to morality. They advance a step beyond the ideas of Egypt, accepting and building on all the former conceptions. They take it for granted that the people understand all about the subject and therefore may be led to what is in many respects a higher ground. Besides this important contrast between Hebrew and Egyptian thought, Professor Moore notes the monotheism inculcated by Moses and contrasts it most instructively with the polytheistic creed of Egypt.

**The Song of Songs.** In the *Evangelical Repository*, beginning with Jan. 1891 and still continuing, Dr. G. Lansing, long a missionary in Egypt, has been writing at length in explanation and comment upon the Song of Songs. His general theory of interpretation rejects any dramatic form of the poem on the ground that "the drama is not a Jewish or Semitic institution, nor the stage a Jewish invention." The three fundamental principles of his exposition he states as follows: (1) "We think the Song has a firm 'historical groundwork,' and that we must definitely settle its literal historical meaning, before we can begin to allegorize or spiritualize. (2) We do not in the whole book recognize any male speaker until in the last chapter. The whole dialogue is carried on between the daughters of Jerusalem and Shulamith, and when a male person is addressed, it is in the way of apostrophe to an absent one, and when one seems to speak it is a female who has put herself in his place by personification. (3) We believe that the literal meaning is the exhibition and commendation of pure connubial love between *one* man and *one* woman, as opposed to polygamy and the false love of the harem; and that the allegorical and spiritual meaning is the union of Jehovah to the individual soul of the believer, and to His spiritual Israel as opposed to the many gods of idolatry; and that there is also an historical thread running through the whole, from the calling of Israel to the coming of our Saviour." In the course of his detailed exposition Dr. Lansing has some very interesting and fresh considerations to offer upon special points on which he throws the light of personal, intimate and long-continued acquaintance with oriental life. Many would question the success of his endeavor to establish the three radical principles on which his exposition is based. The articles are worth careful reading.

**The Feet Washing.**—**John 13: 1-17.** Attention has often been called by commentators to the probability that the old hopes of temporal power for the Christ were dominant with the disciples at the last Passover time. The fact that they contended as to which should be the greatest (Lk. 22: 24) during the very course of the supper illustrates and strengthens the probability. Dr. Deems suggests, in his expository chapters on St. John's Gospel, that they quarrelled over the choice of seats at the table, who should have the seat of honor. This rivalry affords the occasion, according to some writers, for the exhibition of humility and service to others which Jesus gave in John 13. But Dr. Deems in an interesting paragraph calls attention to what may be a better explanation of this act of Jesus. The almost absolute necessity of

washing the feet before a meal in Oriental lands is well known. It was the business of the host to provide a slave for this indispensable service. But at this meal the host for some reason seems to have forgotten it. The question which was agitating the minds of the disciples was—"Who shall wash the feet of this company?" None wanted to undertake this menial service. They all felt too much above it. In coming to the table they strove to see who should be greatest. Now they are striving to see who shall avoid being the least. It is then that with astonishment they behold their Master and the coming King go about to do this thing, which every one of them thought beneath his dignity. Thus the lesson is brought home to them in the closest possible way. Dr. Deems' idea is a fascinating one though of course there is little in the text to support it, the argument from silence being not altogether conclusive.

**Neglect of the Apocrypha.** It may well be asked of present day students of the Bible who ransack commentaries in their search for light on the Scriptures, Why neglect the Apocrypha? The reasons for turning to this strange library of Jewish writings are presented strongly by Dr. Plummer in his discussion of the influence of certain of its books upon the Epistle of James. He claims that coincidences of language and thought far too numerous and too strong to be all of them accidental occur in the writings of Peter, Paul and John as well as in the earliest post-apostolic Christian literature. From this point of view neglect of the Apocrypha is to be deplored. He urges its private reading on the ground that it is a bridge between the two Testaments, being among our best means, and in one sense our only means, of understanding how the Old Testament led up to the New and prepared the way for it. No one can fail to appreciate the changes that appear when one passes from the Old to the New Testament. New persons, sects, schools, opinions, institutions, religious terms and phrases appear in the former which receive explanation in this Apocryphal literature. "It supplies instances of the early use of New Testament words, of old words in new senses. It throws light upon the growth of the popular conception of the Messiah. It illuminates still more the development of the doctrine of the Logos. Above all, it helps us to see something of the evolution of that strange religious system which became the raw material out of which the special doctrines of Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes were formed, and which had a powerful influence upon Christianity itself." Plummer regrets that the R. V. did not cover the Apocrypha since the A. V. was very poor in this respect. He adds that "books which the writers of the New Testament found worthy of study, and from which they derived some of their thoughts and language, ought not to be lightly disregarded." "It is the duty of every reader of the Bible to see that his apprehension of the Old and New Testaments is not hindered through his ignorance of those writings which interpret the process of transition from one to the other." This is a timely exhortation. When these original documents are within our reach it seems unworthy of students that they depend on secondary sources of information. Next to the Revised Version of the Old and New Testaments there is no more useful commentary on the Bible than the Apocryphal books.